

THE TEDDINGTON SOCIETY ROADS & TRANSPORT GROUP

1. Teddington Town Centre Study – Report of Parking sub-Committee.

A Parking sub-Committee of the main Residents' Working Party (TSRWP) has completed a comprehensive report on parking and associated problems in Teddington. It took full account all the area's parking problems, but found that the main parking pressures occurred on either side of the station. These were the West area bounded by Park Road, Sandy Lane, Clarence Road, Victoria Road and Adelaide Road, and the East area bounded by Station Road, Cromwell Road, Udney Park Road and the High Street. The Report therefore recommended that initially, residents and businesses within these two areas be consulted on three possible schemes:-

Option One – No change to present arrangements

Option Two – A “no-cost” scheme which would allow parking on certain designated yellow lines outside the rush hours. To ensure regular turnover of parking spaces, many of those spaces would be time limited, eg. “one hour – no return within two hours”. The times of operation and locations are shown in Annexes 9 and 10 of the Report.

Option Three – A two hour Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) requiring residents and businesses to purchase a parking permit.

The TSRWP recognised the urgent need for High Street parking to be sorted out, and insisted on early consultation about installation of a Pay and Display scheme in the centre section of the High Street, to prevent long term parking in spaces designed for use by shoppers – this scheme was successfully implemented on 12th September 2002.

In addition, the Report recommended that before the main consultation on parking takes place, very short double yellow lines should be installed on certain corners to allow free and safe movement of wheelchair users, pedestrians, and service and emergency vehicles, by preventing illegal and obstructive parking on those corners.

The Report also recommended that greater use should be made of public transport, particularly by the employees of some of the larger businesses and organisations located in Teddington. The adoption of “green transport policies” and provision of off-road parking spaces for essential car users by all businesses and organisations, would substantially reduce the parking problems faced by nearby local residents, thus avoiding the need for expensive parking controls.

Unfortunately, local Councillors have not been willing to accept the recommendations of the Parking sub-Committee, and want to carry out a costly consultation of the whole of the Study area in the hope that residents will vote for expensive CPZs to be introduced (see below). This will bring delays and a certain amount of conflict between residents, as the sub-Committee has found, in line with residents' feelings strongly expressed at the March 2001 Landmark Centre meeting, that there is little support for CPZs. Residents are particularly concerned that CPZs will undermine our shopping centres (as in Hampton Wick), and completely change the character of Teddington. The Society is totally opposed to all-day CPZs, but accepts that there are certain roads where a two hour CPZ may have some benefits for residents, and would not seek to oppose their introduction if most residents in a road want one. However, it is the Society's view that free Option 2 will solve the majority of Teddington's commuter parking problems, without undermining the vibrancy and vitality of our shopping centres, or the attractive and friendly character of the rest of Teddington.

The full Parking Report can be seen in the Library, and on the web by logging on to www.hampton-online.co.uk . A pdf copy can be downloaded for reference purposes.

2. Public Car Parks – selling the family silver.

In his recent comprehensive report, the Unitary Development Plan Inspector specifically recommended that **additional** short term parking should be provided in Teddington to support and retain the vitality and viability of Teddington's shopping centres. This recommendation has been completely ignored by the last Lib/Dem administration which initiated the disposal of the lease of the 60 space Station Road car park (free for shoppers and residents), and set in train the disposal of the pay and display 26 place North Lane (east) shoppers' car park. These serious errors of judgement are being compounded by the new Conservative administration's recent decision to insert new Proposal D17 into the UDP, to add value to the North Lane car park by reclassifying it for residential development. To make matters worse, no Notices about the planned disposals were displayed in either car park or in surrounding roads. It was also observed that the Car Park sign had been turned around to point towards the main car park to discourage use of the east car park – this has now been turned back. I spoke against this new Proposal at the 25th February 2003 Cabinet meeting, but failed to get its removal. I have lodged a formal objection to UDP Proposal D17 on behalf of the Teddington Society.

What is particularly disturbing is the secrecy surrounding these disposals. One would have expected the Teddington Study Residents' Working Party and the Parking sub-Committee to have been consulted about the proposed disposals – they were not. One would also expect Teddington's residents and businesses and the Teddington Society to be consulted – as far as I can ascertain, not one resident or business has been consulted. Although local Councillors have had numerous opportunities to tell the Society about their plans, the only information received (from an Hampton Wick Councillor) was that the depot building in front of the North Lane car park was under consideration for disposal. Even more disturbing, is the fact that local Councillors have confirmed that they planned the disposals on the assumption that residents would be voting for CPZs to be introduced – making the retention of these car parks even more essential, as CPZs significantly reduce the number of kerbside parking spaces.

John Demont and I are in regular contact with High Street businesses, and I have spoken to all the businesses and shops in the Broad Street area. All Broad Street businesses confirmed that they were completely unaware that the very important 26 place North Lane (east) car park was in the process of being prepared for selling off for building development. I also leafleted Park Lane, North Lane, North Place, St Marys Avenue, Ellera Road and part of Middle Lane, all responses indicate that no resident had been consulted, and consequently no resident was aware of the Proposal D17. All agreed that this ill thought out proposal would have serious adverse commercial consequences for the viability of the Broad Street shopping centre, especially for Tesco's, and for residents' parking in the surrounding roads.

Councillors Elengorn, Knight (both for the first time) and Mumford, attended the last Teddington Study Residents' Working Party meeting held on 24th February, but failed to disclose any facts about the disposals to members, who debated the issue in depth, and voted to unanimously oppose Proposal D17. Members instructed me to lodge a belated UDP objection on behalf of the TSRWP – this has been done. Interestingly, the Chairman of the Hampton Wick Association has confirmed the our worst fears by lodging an objection to Proposal D17, saying that Teddington's shopping centre must not be killed off by lack of customer parking as has Hampton Wick's shopping centre.

It does look as if our shoppers' car parks have become a political football – they are much too important for that – let's hope local Conservative and Lib/Dem politicians will put aside their considerable differences and support us in our bid to save both Station Road and North Lane car parks – and in doing so - our shopping centres.